

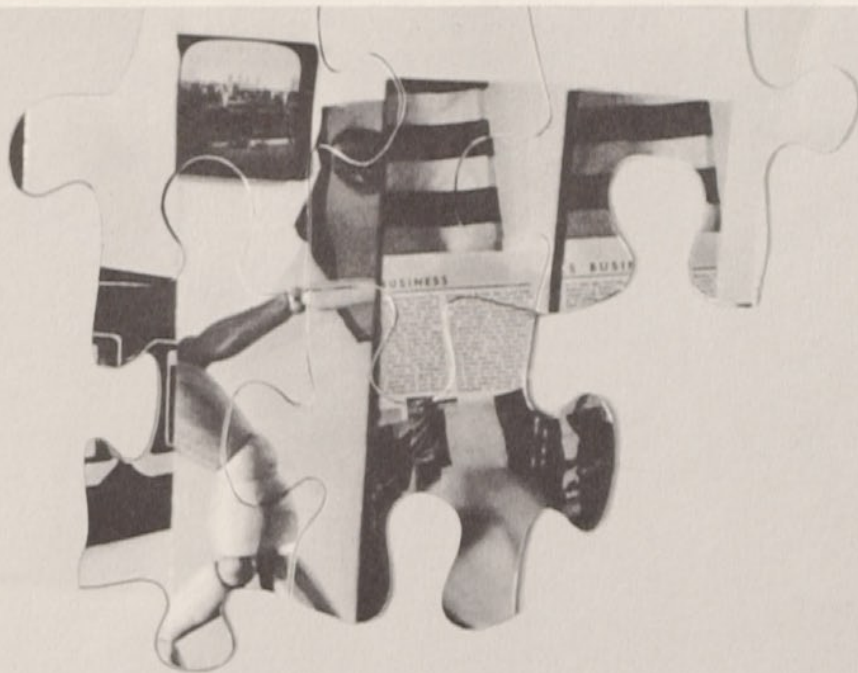
# Design Sense

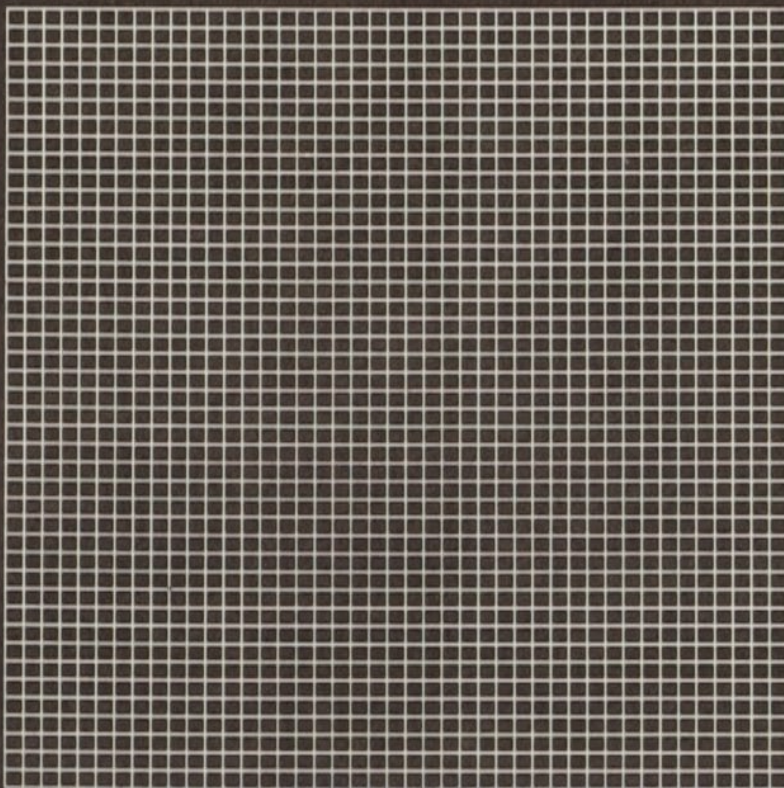
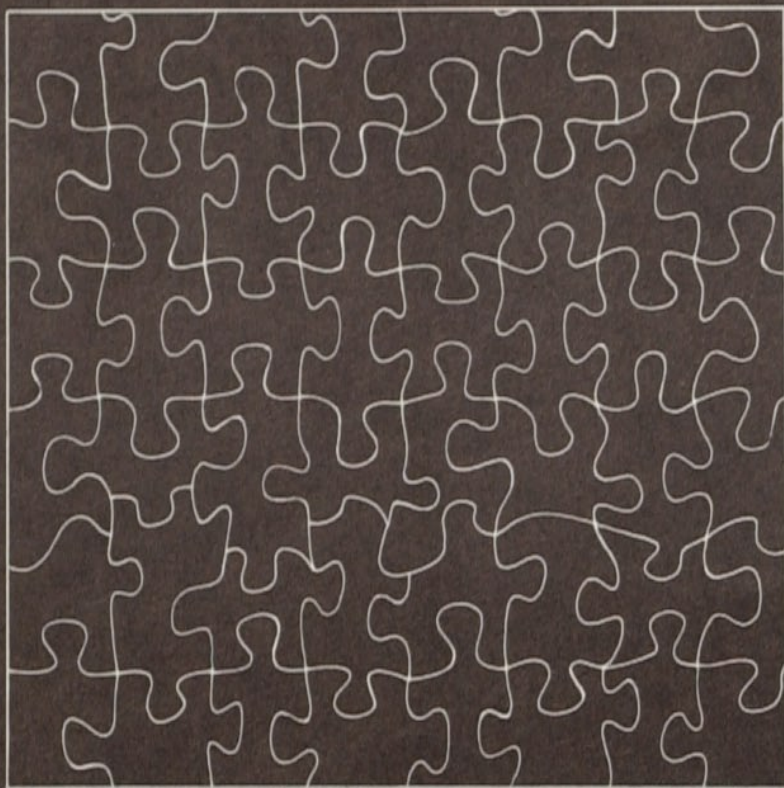
A MARKETING PUBLICATION

38

OF LIPPINCOTT & MARGULIES

When all the pieces are assembled, the Creative Man and the creative, successful company will have much in common.





**In this  
issue of Design**

**Sense,** our purpose has been to present the Creative Man as we see him,

from a marketing viewpoint. He is, to say the least, a difficult subject to

**We do  
not ask that  
you agree**

characterize—from any viewpoint—and we have touched on this as well.

with our version of the Creative Man. You may very well see him in another light

altogether. But we do ask that you recognize—and welcome—his

**There is  
an ever-present  
need**

influence, his presence, the contributions he can make.

for the Creative Man—and the creative processes. All the computers,

all the advances in science and marketing technology, will not

change this. Indeed, one of the stiffest challenges facing the Creative Man today

**We  
have also  
had**

is his ability to use these new tools and concepts—and use them well.

considerable to say about marketing practices and marketing strategy. By linking

both subjects to the Creative Man's coattails, it may even seem that we have

**As you  
read,  
however,**

been dramatizing our own credentials. To a degree, this is true.

we hope that you will join us in finding that the Creative Man and the

creative, successful company have a great deal in common. **LIPPINCOTT & MARGULIES.**



## If the Creative Man,

as we see him, personifies much that is contemporary and commercial, he has also been fashioned—as all men have—from succeeding tides of civilization and conflicting viewpoints.

We can look on him as a kind of financial trouble-shooter for Western Man, which he is, or we can aggrandize him as the rebellious heir of Ancient Greece, which again he is.

### To some of us,

he is set apart from his fellow man by a mystical faculty for doing Great Deeds, and doing them before anyone else. To others, the most astounding thing about him is that he's not unique—that you can't program him into a prototype.

It is not our wish to prolong, or encourage, this debate, but we will vote with those who claim the Creative Man is the individual—and there are many, fortunately—who can get things done, with style and consistency, when the odds are against him.

For the purposes of this article, it has seemed necessary to restrict the Creative Man to a corporate bailiwick and to portray him in terms of a composite, if not complete, marketing man. (And as marketing men ourselves, with a healthy respect for his achievements and character, we at Lippincott & Margulies take special pride in reporting on the Creative Man's efforts for our own clients.)

Even in this 20th century framework, however, it becomes evident that his spiritual ancestors have romped from Babylon to Carthage to Alexandria, sold tickets to the Acropolis, exalted or cursed the Roman Empire, and fought the Moors at Poitiers under Martel. Some rejoiced, we suspect, as Charlemagne was crowned emperor by the Pope, and

others jumped from the Dark Ages into The Renaissance—almost as though they feared there were only a few choice seats still available.

### In an affluent society, such as ours,

it should matter greatly that the Creative Man is so frequently handicapped by corporate policy and compromise. Apparently, this disturbs only a few. And the reason, quite possibly, may be that the Creative Man wears many hats, but seldom appears with a sign on his back to proclaim his identity.

Assuming that this explanation has merit, why should anyone go to bat for a phantom? Indeed, who doesn't have to compromise? And truly now, is the Creative Man as essential to society as he's cracked up to be? Could he do it alone?

History or palmistry or tomorrow morning may bring a better answer to these questions than any we can give now. But why wait? Let's look at this phenomenon, the Creative Man, at his psyche—if such can be shown—his methods, his goals.

## Look Beyond the Arts

If you can visualize the great spectrum of history as a parade of men and ideas, and men with ideas, then our thesis—that the Creative Man has made his mark, and had his say, at all turning points, in all ages—becomes valid.

It is a commonplace of our society, nonetheless, to seek and find the Creative Man only within the workshops of the seven so-called lively arts. Rod Serling and Tennessee Williams are writers, writing is creative, therefore Serling and Williams are creative men. James T.

Aubrey, Jr., CBS-TV president, and David Merrick, Broadway producer, hire creative talents, hiring is a management function, hence Aubrey and Merrick are business men.

Isn't that the way it goes? Well, it is. But the conclusions drawn from syllogisms, all too often, are a heap of semantic nonsense. True creativity, we contend, is a total achievement. True creativity, we further contend, has been the province not only of the artist, but of the industrialist, the soldier, scientist, craftsman, philosopher, merchant, and statesman—to name just a few.

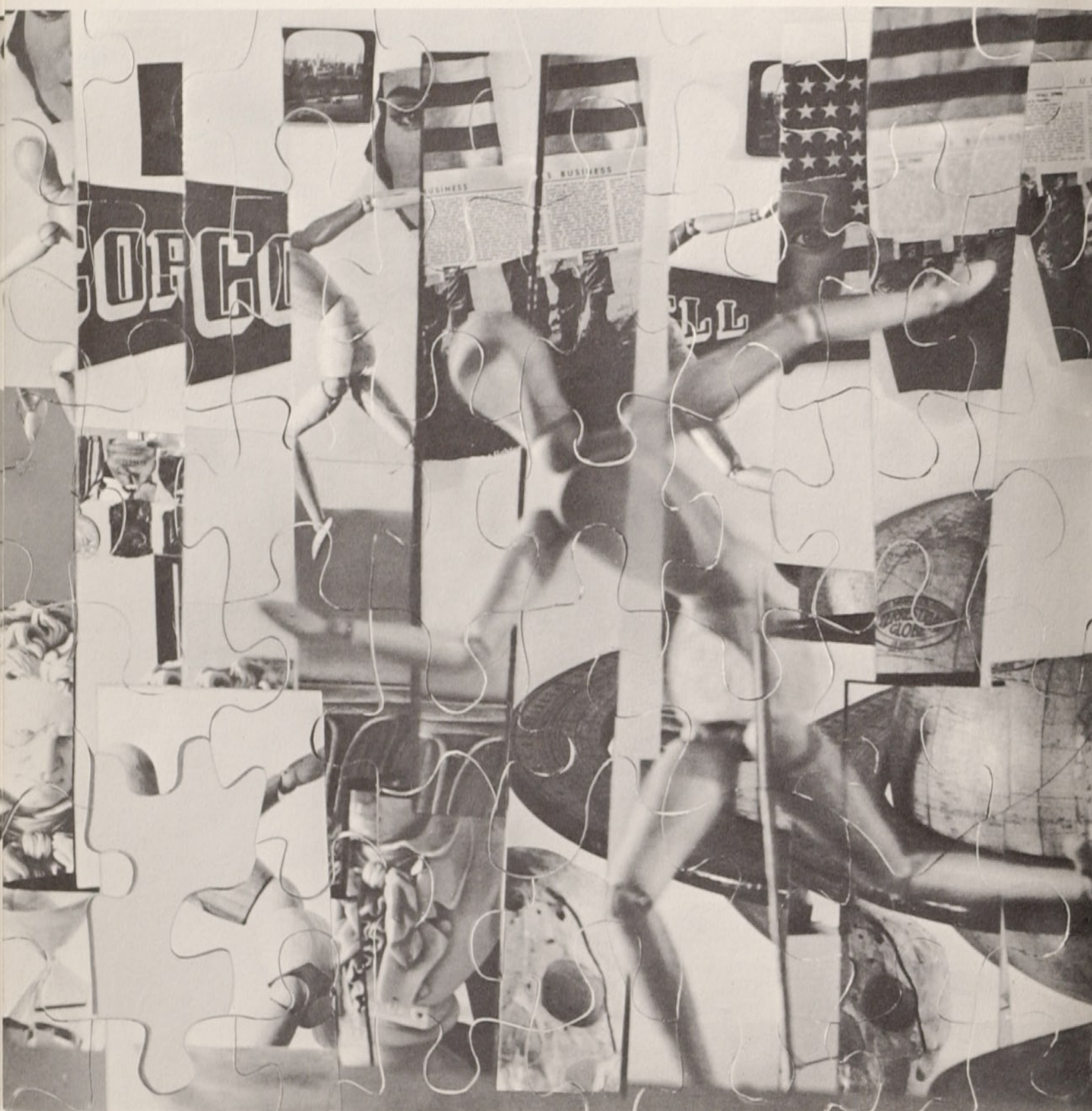
### Argue the point, if you will,

but the visions which sent Marco Polo on his remarkable travels through India and Kubla Khan's China were, to us, more akin to those of the Creative Man than the Fortune Hunter. The sense of intense, lasting nationalism which Napoleon gave 19th century France, was not this, too, more a step into creative, causative statesmanship than an after effect of unprecedented military triumphs?

Returning to the 20th century, we would also equate the Creative Man with both Henry Ford, Sr., and Alfred P. Sloan, Jr., for what may seem paradoxical reasons. Widely acclaimed for mass production methods, Ford's greatest achievement actually was in discovering a previously unforeseen, non-existent market for his low-price cars. To somewhat lesser renown, Sloan created the position of professional manager, while introducing his "decentralization" policies at General Motors, and both concepts have greatly changed the structure and strategy of big business management throughout the world.

### To take another giant step into omniscience,

man's competence.



we find it reasonable to believe that many of the same qualities which make a successful, effective businessman tick will also produce, say, an inspiring statesman, a rebel against inspiring statesmen, a city editor, the advance-man for Barnum & Bailey, an educator, evangelist, gambler, artist, or quarterback.

For the man we're talking about—as must be obvious by now—is many things to many people. If you argue, however, that the Creative Man is none of these things—or the incarnation of them all—that, too, may be quite possible. The question we raise is simply, "How can you be sure?"

## More Than A Maverick

Earlier this year, the chief executive of one of the nation's largest advertising agencies was widely quoted as saying... "The 15th century Renaissance Man should be the ideal of the 20th century advertising man."

We heartily agree, and would argue with this statement only to the point of substituting the Creative Man—this composite marketing man of ours—for "the 20th century advertising man."

At the same time, we would point out that the men who did most to shape the Renaissance, and give it meaning—da Vinci, Pico, Machiavelli, Castiglione, and Savonarola—were all something of a maverick. Doesn't it follow, then, that we might also make room for the mavericks in our midst?

### In our book, a maverick

doesn't necessarily slake his thirst with peach brandy, chew twist, and bathe only on a Saturday night.

He is, however, uncommonly impatient with experts in the art of hindsight—and just ornery enough to join their ranks at times.

He will, we're quite sure, agree with Browning... "A man's reach must exceed his grasp—else what's a heaven for?"

Chances are he's more familiar with Murphy's Second Law\* than Rosser Reeves is with Unique Selling Propositions—and can cite chapter and verse on both from personal experience.

### His desktop may be whistle-clean,

but his briefcase will be bulging with such miscellany as... the 1963 Report of the President's Commission on the Status of American Women, numerous inter-office memos, an ad agency study of "Uniformity and Diversity in the Common Market Countries," a pinochle deck, tear sheets from trade magazines, blueprints of a new sales office, coffee-stained copy of "The Spy Who Came in from the Cold," page proofs for the company's annual report, and a catalog listing philatelic societies in Latin America.

Most people tell conflicting tales about his rise to eminence, if eminent he is. "He was always talking," one will say. "They must have thought he knew something."

"He really wanted to teach, or write, or drive a truck in Vermont, and still does," a friend explains. "What can you do with a guy like that?"

We have called him a maverick, and yet there obviously is much, much more to be said. Perhaps by looking at the marketplace in which he roams, the missing pieces will fall into place.

\*If there's even one fatal flaw in a marketing plan, some nitwit will find it—and champion it!

## A Scorecard Won't Help

Much that goes on in marketing today begins or ends at the data processing machine, or with a nation-wide survey, and always in a maze of tell-tale graphs and flip-charts. Everybody talks in savvy terms of subliminal perception studies, design equities, exotic materials, Tel-Star, marketing platforms, convenience packaging, corporate identity projects, and motivational research. You no longer need a scoreboard to tell the players, it has been said, you need a Ph.D. in marketing nomenclature to tell what the game is all about.

### Here at Lippincott & Margulies,

we have used many of these tools and concepts, and have pioneered some. We do, in fact, feel quite comfortable in handling them, and wonder at others who don't.

At the same time—perhaps it's the maverick in ourselves—we are distrustful of solutions in which intuitive judgment, experience, and, yes, common sense have been neglected.

We would not, for example, discard all elements of a package design simply because product sales were nosediving, and a new container—as it often is—could be the cure needed. There is an equity, built up by years of promotion and familiarity, which virtually outlaws any new liberties with certain design elements—say, the G.E. trademark, the Lucky Strike bullseye, the Betty Crocker spoon, AT&T's bell-circle emblem, or Borden's beloved Elsie.

But all this is about us—or is it? We think not, really. For it's just as characteristic of the true maverick to welcome change,



as it is for him to say, "Hell, no!" at the first sign of monkey-see, monkey-do alterations.

And it's equally characteristic for the same person to spend years in research, a fortune in development and tooling up, and even risk losing all competitive advantage by clinging to test-market schedules, as it is for him to build an over-night hunch into a product line worth millions.

**What we're saying, beyond all else,**

is that sophisticated and successful marketing practices do need, and must have, a solid platform. This platform, however, can be constructed on one man's vision—don't we all rent cars?—or the collective efforts which have produced so many major marketing triumphs.

## **On Emerson and Diversification**

From time to time, one of our marketing studies prompts a remark like this: "It's good, very good and very complete. I'm certain this is the approach we must take. Now, if we can just get the approval of our Board . . ."

More than any thing else, such situations have caused us to wonder, what kind of man is he—he who can get the approval of the Board?

"He's a burden bearer," we've been told. "Wrestles every problem into the ground, and won't let up until things go his way."

"Greatest spell-binder since William Jennings Bryan," another version goes. "When he raises his voice, the Board members lower their heads and stop bickering."

"There's no trick to it," others will tell

you. "If the proposal is sound, you tell them so and why. The Board will have no objection to making a profit."

**Our point?**

**Just this: where people are concerned,**

there is more than one course open for influencing their actions, or predicting their reactions. Past experience in charting the right course can be invaluable, but it should be remembered that yesterday's route to success can lead to catastrophe tomorrow. And this is as applicable to companies as it is to individuals—even those who can get the approval of the Board.

"Foolish consistency," said Emerson, "is the hobgoblin of little minds." We couldn't agree more, and if Emerson seems a strange source for marketing men to quote, consider the staggering investments in corporate diversification today.

Is it consistent, for example, for Armstrong Cork Company's total product line to consist of less than 1% in cork items? How many of the giant tire and rubber companies are producing only tires and rubber products—and wouldn't a change in their corporate names be extremely wise? Hasn't it been fairly well established that the railway companies would now be much better off if they had looked for new horizons?

**To get back to people,**

how many college graduates actually are working at the job—or even in the same general area—for which their degrees were taken? We don't know with any certainty, but suspect that a phenomenal number have gone a'wandering.

And why shouldn't this be so? Witness the speech teacher turned inventor: Alexander Graham Bell. The gunpowder merchant turned chemical pioneer:

E. I. du Pont de Nemours. The budding lawyer turned Broadway columnist: Leonard Lyons. The engineer turned president: Herbert Hoover. The junkman turned Hollywood Rajah: Louis B. Mayer. The bank clerk turned heavyweight champ: James J. Corbett. The medical student turned novelist: W. Somerset Maugham. The list is endless.

These were not Renaissance men in the grand sense; no da Vincis, no incomparable humanists chanting . . . "Men can do all things if they will." Nor were they, and this is their common greatness, limited by the "foolish consistency" that so often stymies the growth of corporations and executives alike.

## **No Merlins, No Mittys**

Perhaps the greatest danger in sketching our Merlin-of-the-Marketplace is that he brashly comes through larger than life.

Here he is, it may seem we're saying, second-guessing his research department, out-guessing his advertising agency, and making the world over with pinfeathers and pipedreams. Backed to the wall by the Robinson-Patman Act, and stymied overseas by the European Common Market, he can still smile and forecast how the population explosion will solve all corporate ills by 1970. Asked for an analysis of consumer taste preferences in the 11 Western states, his answer comes back—by morning—as concise and penetrating as a Hearst crime reporter's eye-witness report of how a hand grenade was slipped into the governor's sandwich.

There are such men. Walter Mitty was one. Horatio Alger, Jr., chronicled their lives frequently. And wasn't Babbitt something of a self-made soothsayer, too?

are, he won't.



It is not our intention, however, to talk facetiously of supermen or fictional flights of fancy. But we are concerned, and very much so, about men with ideas, men with a gift for translating ideas—and research and conflicting viewpoints—into action and results.

In a very real sense, the translation process is a creative one, and represents the ultimate test of the Creative Man. Its application to the Marketing Concept, as practiced at Lippincott & Margulies, has become, we feel, a good example of what the Creative Man can do—when given the freedom to swim upstream or down.

## Myths About Marketing

If we protest too much that the Creative Man is not a miracle-worker, we also cringe at the thought that this might be interpreted as an excuse for his shortcomings—if they are that—in the marketing arena.

**As a basic business and economic concept,** marketing is as old as the custom of bartering. Yet, the myths about it persist, and abuses of the term "marketing" still plague countless companies.

In one company, marketing is a departmental operation, alongside sales, advertising, sales promotion, product design, and so on. In another, the director of marketing serves only as an advisor to corporate management. All too often marketing is a catch-all term used to glamorize subsidiary functions and personnel. It is frequently considered a pipeline to the consumer, and a service for determining consumer preferences. It is often given lip service, without decision-making authority. It truly deserves a better fate.

In a previous issue of Design Sense, we presented a definition of the Marketing Concept which warrants repeating at this point . . .

"Marketing is a system or technique for approaching business and business problems. It is the sum total of criteria which we bring to the making of a business decision, rather than any set of facts we may use to document or reinforce a decision. It is *how* we do, not *what* we do.

"Marketing is not the exclusive domain of one executive and his staff: Everyone from the president of the corporation on downward must be conscious of the marketing concept. Marketing thinking is needed and important in all divisions, as contrasted with production thinking or knowledge which is vital and essential in specific areas, but not in every corporate activity.

"Unless management is aware of the importance of marketing and able to exercise sound marketing judgment, the corporation does not derive its full measure of success and profit from its efforts. Where marketing is isolated and left out of the decision-making areas that are properly within its competence, the corporation most likely will suffer.

### **"Marketing is a rational process**

which must challenge intuition, not eliminate it. It is a systematic process for building from known factors to less knowns. It is an analytical tool, and part of its importance is gauged by the degree to which it can effectively use the 'consumer concept.'

"But it would be naive to assume that any corporation could function profitably if it were only consumer and not corporate-interest oriented. Obviously, finan-

cial and production considerations are vitally important to the corporate health. Finance and production are, by their nature, inward-looking corporate functions. The consumer concept, by definition, is the ability of the company to be in close touch with the outside—with the dynamic and changing needs, wants and desires of the consumer. Sound marketing judgment helps to strike a balance between the corporation's needs and the consumer."

If our definition is sound, and we believe it to be, the Creative Man and all of us concerned with marketing have our hands full.

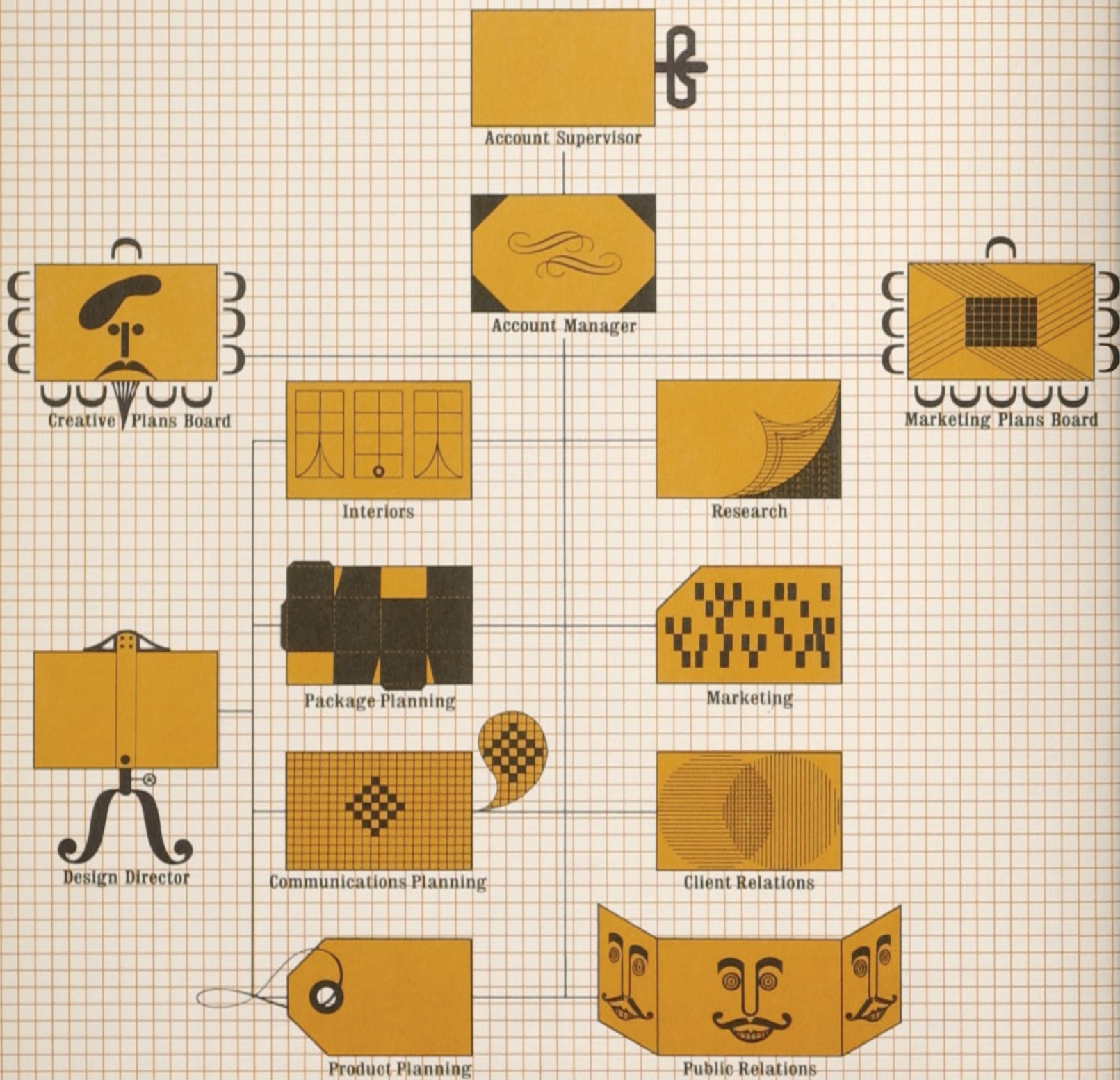
In theory and practice, however, the Marketing Concept is not unduly complicated. But it is, as we have said, "a rational process which must challenge intuition, not eliminate it." The creative marketing man we have characterized will find its basic methodology extremely adaptable, both in launching new products and in projecting a corporate endorsement which stimulates consumer acceptance of the entire product line.

## The Major Requirements

When properly developed and applied, the Marketing Concept has two major requirements. These are:

- 1) The development of a distinctive product or service—one which satisfies an existing consumer or industrial need, or creates the desire to purchase a non-essential.
- 2) A disciplined plan to ensure that all departments of the company involved—and all service agencies—project and communicate that product or service with pre-determined consistency.

research into a sound marketing platform.



### **During the first stage—**

in which the Creative Man may or may not take part—we will assume that production problems are not insurmountable, that the product—whatever it is—will get made. By the time it's made, however, we can't assume that someone will buy it, and we can't assume that it will be bought in sufficient quantities to justify the R&D investment. The bankruptcy courts are servicing too many people who have made this assumption.

Proof of this is that last year U.S. industry sunk some \$4 billion in products which fizzled out. For a decade or more now, more than four out of every five new products introduced have failed to make the grade.

(True enough, our GNP curve is climbing—almost 5% in 1962, and more than 5% in 1963—but the price of such progress can be prohibitive, particularly when your own losses are being averaged off against someone else's gains.)

Because of this extravagant fatality rate, an early step for successful marketing practitioners is the feasibility study. In most instances—there are some exceptions—this is sound procedure. We must add, however, that there is nothing feasible about a market study which measures initial product acceptance and potential, and then omits recommendations for test marketing and communication policies.

If there are loopholes in your feasibility study, test marketing will help show them up. If test marketing confirms your expectations, then clearly defined communication policies—objectives, techniques, timing, and coordination—are your best safeguard against unforeseen changes in the marketplace, and the often *irrational* behavior of the American consumer.

From management's viewpoint, more-

over, these various procedures each represent an opportunity to reevaluate the product concept, modify it, or abandon it for more profitable pursuits. Without them, as one prominent psychologist has said, "Once the wheels of an organization get going, there's often no turning back."

## **Guessing Games Are Costly**

The Marketing Concept, in case you're wondering, is not a certified business-risk policy, nor do we claim it to be perfected. But recent marketing history, cluttered with catastrophes which might have been avoided, makes a king-size rebuttal against settling for anything less. Consider the following:

### **Case History #1:**

A distinctively-styled line of TV sets is introduced. Dealer enthusiasm is high, production quotas are doubled as the new year begins, but sales are tumbling by midyear. A year later all dealer shipments are canceled. Manufacturer explains: we didn't pre-test the styling, because the one true test of a product is to price it and put it on the market.

### **Case History #2:**

\$5 million is spent developing a new optical instrument. After five years of sweat and tears, the manufacturer dumped his problem before a marketing consultant, and was told: There's no market for this instrument, sell your patent and give up.

### **Case History #3:**

So that little girls could practice the familiar feminine arts of lipstick daubing, eyebrow make-up, etc., they were offered a new doll, complete with cosmetics set. These same cosmetics, however, could also be used for smearing wall-

paper, floors, drapes, and mothers could see this all too quickly. Result: The toy company lost about \$200,000 before dropping its trouble-making doll.

If these case histories prove anything, and we could cite numerous others, it's that guessing games have what may truly be called a *fatal fascination*.

To call them "guessing games" may, of course, be unfair. For even the examples recited above did involve companies immensely successful, over the years, in the marketing of new products. The decisions which resulted in these costly flops were not made, willy-nilly, to satisfy some executive's ego, or to demonstrate that we-did-it-before-and-we-can-do-it-again. And in each instance, the marketing problems faced were far more complicated than these condensed case histories indicate.

## **Some Risks Will Remain**

On the surface, at least, there are seemingly sound reasons for short-circuiting some of the preliminaries which the Marketing Concept embraces.

Test marketing, it may be contended, can tip off the competition. Time-consuming feasibility studies, others will claim, can give someone else first crack at a potentially plush market. And more than one extensive sampling of consumer preferences, admittedly, has led to completely unjustified—and expensive—optimism.

Quite clearly, we agree, there are risks which the Marketing Concept cannot eliminate. To which we must irreverently ask, "So what?"

On the day that all risks are abolished

from the marketplace, the Creative Man will start drawing unemployment checks, and we will quietly fold our tent and slip away. Until then—as designers and marketing consultants—we shall continue to present ourselves as people who can *reduce* the risks which are inherent in a competitive economic society.

You pay your money, the old saying goes, and take your choice.

**If you  
choose, as we  
hope you will,**

the total marketing approach, the product being introduced will enter the marketplace with certain advantages:

- 1) A package or design with which the product can be expected to win customers and influence dealers.
- 2) A name which, at best, creates goodwill; and, at the least, does not confuse or irritate the consumer. For if the name—or packaging, or both—is notably mediocre, there is no more certain way to waste your money.
- 3) A single, consistent, disciplined plan for communicating the new product's characteristics and performance. Time and again, experience has shown that new products succeed when all messages, verbal and visual, contribute to a pre-determined theme; that they fail when contradictory impressions are being generated.
- 4) A detailed report for evaluation of sales appeal, product merits and deficiencies, and the competition to be faced, both here and abroad. At Lippincott & Margulies, these findings are presented to clients in a "positioning statement"—with the expectation that the manufacturer's own experience and judgment will further strengthen our objective and systematic analysis.

Consumer preference studies, purchasing analyses, and other types of market research are the foundation on which all of these advantages are established.

This same research, what's more, is very much a part of the creative process. For in marketing, and business generally, if the best solution is to be found—and the means to implement it—you must first examine and evaluate the complete problem. In effect, the function of research is to assemble the elements on which final decisions—the creative decisions, if you will—can be made.

## **The Missing Pieces**

All too often today, corporate hierarchies are so organized that each department directly concerned with marketing has a highly autonomous role.

We object to this, and strongly, but only when there is no over-all discipline from a high central office. For working in isolation (semi- or complete) these departments—product design, advertising, marketing, sales, sales promotion, etc.—can tamper away until the master plan is thoroughly splintered.

When this happens, as it so often does, consumers cannot be expected to form a favorable impression. Why should they? More importantly, how can they? There are approximately 300,000 brands or products on the American market today. Trademark applications are received by the U.S. Patent Office at the rate of 200 per month. The public, engulfed by advertising and signage, is choked up to here with competitive sales messages. One more new message, distinctive and consistently rendered, might get through. But several? And about another—what was it now—some kind of gizmo?

**Considering  
all this, the  
question becomes:**

can we, or anyone, truly offer a blueprint for avoiding the marketing miseries? Yes? No? Maybe? Our purpose, however, has been as much to raise questions as to give answers. And if, because of this pre-determined plan, we have done you out of a happy ending, would you have had us do otherwise?

**Somewhere,  
in your own company  
most likely,**

there is a Creative Man—or two or three or more—who will provide the missing pieces, and in a shape you've never seen before. When he comes along, you'll know him—not because he's a champion of the Marketing Concept, or an employee of Lippincott & Margulies, but because the things he says and does show an exotic mixture of intuitive judgment, experience, and common sense.

If you have missed any of these issues of Design Sense, you may obtain copies by writing to us on your company letterhead:

**Design Sense #28**

Corporate Endorsement.  
Is the Corporate Image Obsolete?  
The Johnson's Wax Story.

**Design Sense #29**

Where and Why Women Shoppers Buy.  
Royal Puts Fashion Appeal Into Typewriters.  
How Heritage House Opens a Market.

**Design Sense #31**

Special Marketing Issue.  
Marketing and Corporate Profits.  
U.S. Steel: A Marketing Challenge.

**Design Sense #32**

New Products: Boon or Burden?  
For Increased Sales: Think Concentrated!  
Who Put the Bubble in Sprite?

**Design Sense #33**

A Study in Modern Marketing (Montclair Cigarettes).

**Design Sense #34**

Creativity: Buzz Word or Skillful Art?  
Color: The Formula That Doesn't Work.  
The Name: First Step in International Communications.

**Design Sense #35**

Expressing the Group Concept: Group W.  
Boundaries of Good Taste.  
Humor in Marketing.

**Design Sense #36**

The Chrysler Corporate Identity Program.

**Design Sense #37**

Corporate Identity Revisited.

Image Research, Inc.  
Marketing Systems, Inc.  
Names, Inc.  
Package Research Institute

—Affiliate companies of Lippincott & Margulies, Inc., 430 Park Avenue, New York 10022, N. Y.



Lippincott & Margulies | Industrial Designers and Marketing Consultants | New York | Toronto | Detroit | Zurich